

Charles and Matilda Wapato and Family

By John V. Peters

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Charles and Matilda; Matthew, Frank and Paul about 1896

About the Author

John V. Peters was born in Wenatchee in 1943 and grew up in Manson. He has a bachelor's degree in economics from Grove City College, PA and has taken some master's degree classes in history from Seattle University. He spent two years in the Army (8th Special Forces Group, Ft. Gulick, Panama), worked two years for Old National Bank in Pasco and Kennewick, WA, six years in the budget office of the Seattle School District and 20 years in the finance department of the Boeing Company in Seattle. Since returning to Manson, he has done extensive research into the Wapato Indians and the Moses allotments.



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Forward

What follows is the story of the lives of Charles and Matilda Wapato and their children, mostly from 1891 to 1974. We will look briefly at the historical background of the Indian allotments and homesteads on the north shore of Lake Chelan in the late 1800s and early 1900s. And we will say something of Wapato John and his wife Madeline, some of the other north shore Indian residents and Wapato John's brother Silicosasket, the last chief of the Entiat tribe. But our principal purpose will be to get to know Charles, Matilda, Paul and Frank Wapato.¹

Introduction

From 1890 when Charles and Matilda Wapato, accompanied by their 2 year old son Matthew, moved to the north shore of Lake Chelan they began to exert leadership within the north shore Indian community. Charles was the oldest son of Wapato John, the patriarch of the north shore Indians, and Matilda was the daughter of Doc Jim, who operated a 168-acre homestead at the west end of Alkali lake, later known as Charlie Wapato lake and then simply as Wapato lake. Lower Joe creek ran right through the Doc Jim homestead providing water for both

¹ A shorter version of this paper was published in the 2013 issue of History Notes, Volume XXVIII, a publication of The Lake Chelan Historical Society.

domestic use and for the irrigation of crops. Doc Jim was a well-known and respected Yakima Indian who had married a woman, Yip-Yip-in-Wat, from the Wenatchi tribe of the Mission or Cashmere area.

In 1890 both Wapato John and Doc Jim were growing old. Wapato John was about 70 years old and Doc Jim was probably older. Doc Jim asked his daughter Matilda and his son-in-law Charles to leave their Mission homestead, where they had lived for some years, and move to his homestead at Lake Chelan to care for him and operate his ranch. Charles and Matilda agreed and moved to the north shore of Lake Chelan. Doc Jim seems to have died in 1893. He left the homestead ranch to Matilda, his cattle to his other daughter Yacine or Hyacinth, and his horses to his son George who lived on the Coast.

Some Prior History

At some point before 1872, Charles left his father's ranch and trading post along the Columbia river where he was raised and moved to Mission, where he married Matilda and established a homestead. Wapato John and his family and followers remained along the Columbia river. A 1904 book of sketches of the lives of prominent persons in north central Washington describes Wapato John as "one of the most progressive men of the Lake Chelan country. He married Madeline, a woman of his tribe. To this union the following children were born: Charles,

Sylvester, Peter, Mary, Mary Ann and Louis. The last one was drowned in the Columbia river.”

In January, 1912, after Wapato John’s death on September 7, 1911, the Indian Agent from Nespelem held a hearing in Chelan in which he took testimony to establish the heirs of Wapato John. At this hearing, Madeline, Sylvester, Matilda and Anasta, the wife of Columbia Peter, all testified that Charles Wapato was the son of Wapato John and Madeline’s younger sister, Temis. Madeline testified that Wapato John and Temis did not marry; “they just ran away together for a short time,” as her words were translated and transcribed by John Baptiste Wapato, her grandson, who acted as interpreter at the hearing. Sylvester testified: “We all had the same father, but Charlie had a different mother. His mother was a sister of my mother.” “Charlie was only a month or two older than I was.” He added: “My father raised Charlie from the time Charlie’s mother died, when he was a little boy, until he became a man and began to make his own living.” Matilda testified: “He [Wapato John] always called Charlie his son, and Charlie always called Wapato John his father.” Anasta Peter testified: “I have known them [the Wapato family] for about 45 years.” “He [Wapato John] had one boy, named Charlie Wapato, by the sister of Madeline.” So it seems pretty clear that Charles Wapato was a half-brother to Madeline’s children, contrary to what was

written in the sketch of Wapato John's life and family published in 1904.

On April 19, 1879, President R. B. Hayes, after negotiations with Chief Moses, created a new reservation for Chief Moses, his people and other friendly Indians. This yet-unnamed reservation included 1.5 million acres of land extending down from the Canadian border along the west side of the Okanogan river, westward for fifteen miles and north again to the Canadian border. On March 6, 1880, President R. B. Hayes doubled the size of this reservation and named it the Columbia reservation. This extension brought the reservation south along the west edge of the Columbia river to the mouth of the Chelan river, then turned west following the northern side of the Lake Chelan shoreline and extending to the headwaters of the Lake Chelan, then north to the Canadian border. The U.S. government wanted Moses and other local Indians to move onto reservations. They were offered the option to move to the Colville reservation or to the new Columbia reservation.

Probably in 1880, Wapato John, his family and a small group of Indians that resided with him along the Columbia river moved to the Columbia reservation. With the permission of Chief Long Jim of the Chelan Indian tribe, whose permanent camp was at the foot of Lake Chelan, Wapato John of the Entiat tribe moved

his family and followers to the north shore area which initially was called Wapato by white residents and visitors.

The Columbia reservation was ended a few years later in 1883, following further negotiations with Chief Moses in Washington D.C. The Indians living on the reservation were given the option of moving to the Colville reservation or taking one square mile of land where they lived. Ultimately, forty such allotments were taken, ranging from Lake Chelan up the Okanogan river as far as the Canadian border. By act of Congress of July 4, 1884, roughly ten square miles of property were marked out as allotments, labeled MA-8 through MA-17, for Wapato John, each of his grown children living on the north shore and the heads of household of his followers. Charles and Matilda were living on their homestead near Mission at this time and didn't participate in these allotments. On May 1, 1886, President Grover Cleveland signed an order opening the former Columbia reservation to homesteaders under the 1862 Homestead Act.

The Public Record, 1891-1907

In 1891 DeWitt C. Britt moved from Spokane to Chelan Falls and established a newspaper called the Chelan Falls Leader, first issued on August 6, 1891. By August, 1892, he had moved to Chelan and renamed his paper the Chelan Leader. Much of our knowledge about Charles and Matilda Wapato at Lake Chelan

comes from these weekly newspapers. DeWitt Britt became a particular friend of Charles Wapato and gave far more prominence in his newspaper to Charles and his family and to their activities, travels and thinking than to any of the other north shore Indians, including Wapato John himself. What follows are quotations from these newspapers along with my own occasional explanatory comments.

Background On Wapato John

October 1, 1891, Chelan Falls Leader

Wapato John, chief of the tribe of Indians living on the north shore of Lake Chelan, was in the city Friday. He and another Indian brought two wagon loads of potatoes, squashes, melons, tomatoes and peaches to this market, which were disposed of very readily at reasonable figures. These Indians, under proper religious training, have become producers and good citizens, and they have fine, well cultivated farms along the lake shore, where they have taken thirteen sections in severalty. The chief is a man very much above the average in intelligence, and under the authority of the Catholic church, conducts the religious services for his peaceable, industrious and well behaved little community in their new and neat church edifice, lately completed and dedicated.²

² The other Indian referred to is most likely Wapato John's son Charlie since Charlie and his wife Matilda are the only other Indians ever mentioned in later issues of the newspaper as bringing goods to Chelan for sale.

October 22, 1891

Beautiful Lake Chelan

The following article is taken from the Coulee City News, and was written by a lady who spent a week or two camping on Lake Chelan.

Upon the north shore the Indians live, owning thirteen square miles. They own their land in severalty there, having a whole section each. The residents speak well of them, as being honest and thrifty. They are civilized and have adopted the Catholic faith, have comfortably furnished houses and raise fine gardens, besides horses and cattle. I was shown a stalk of corn they had raised, which looked to be eight feet high, and the huge ears of white corn they brought into market were good eating. This whole region was a grand hunting ground for the Indians before the advent of the white man. Deer, goats and bears still abound in the depths of the mountains. The Indians have a settlement called Wapato, on Wapato bay, an arm of the lake, and have their church over which the Wapato chief presides, and celebrates the Catholic rites. A colony of Italians have also taken up land near town, and are converting the bare hillsides into vineyards, confident of success.

Both of these newspaper articles refer to the north shore Indians owning thirteen square miles of property. This may be a slight exaggeration. There were ten Moses allotments on the

north shore, each with a maximum of 640 acres or one square mile. Six of the allotments were over 600 acres and four were less than 600 acres. However, there were other Indians with homesteads on the north shore at this time. Homesteads were supposed to be no more than 160 acres or one-fourth of a square mile in size. I haven't located enough Indian homesteaders on early maps and other records to boost the total Indian acreage to thirteen square miles, but nevertheless the number is in the ball park. Early writers may have been confused about who held Moses allotments and who was a homesteader. Some homesteading Indians I have identified on early USGS maps and from newspaper stories and later Indian recollections are Doc Jim, Indian Joe (after whom Joe creek was named), Lewie, Clate, John Williams and Osella.

Wapato John was frequently called a chief by the white community though I find no evidence that he called himself a chief. At Lake Chelan, at least, he never took on the regalia or trappings of an Indian chief, or frankly of being a native Indian at all. He wore western clothing, followed the Catholic religion and was little different from any European pioneer leader of a unique ethnic group. On the other hand, his older half-brother, Silacosasket, was the last chief of the Entiat Indian tribe, and is so memorialized by the Colville Consolidated Tribes. Many Entiat Indians moved, under pressure, to the Colville reservation. Silacosasket, however, remained on his ranch on

the Columbia river, at the mouth of the Entiat, all his life. When he died on February 11, 1903, he was buried in Wapato John's Indian cemetery on the north shore of Lake Chelan.

Charles and Matilda Wapato

December 31, 1891

Wapato Charlie was in the city Monday, with some fine hams of venison, which he sold readily. The Indian, of whom mention was made in the second issue of this paper, is one of the most intelligent and industrious men in the community, and has a fine ranch on Lake Chelan, with a good house and orchard. It is wonderful what a transformation for the better has been wrought in these Indians. The Leader believes that they are very much preferable as settlers to a vast number of foreigners who come to these shores.

June 2, 1892

Wapato Charlie, one of the most intelligent and well to do Indian farmers of Lake Chelan, was in the city Thursday. Charlie dresses and lives like the whites, raises good crops of fruits and vegetables and drives about with a spirited team and buggy as big as anybody.

August 25, 1892, The Chelan Leader

On Monday, Charlie Wapato brought to this office the largest potatoes seen in this vicinity this year. They were beauties. Charlie was on his way to the Sound to pick hops and had his

klutchman and several tenas Wapatoes in the buggy with him. He will return in about seven weeks.

“Klutchman” is a Chinook language reference to Charlie’s wife, Matilda. The several “tenas Wapatoes” (small or young Wapato's) may have referred to their four year old son, Matthew, and some other Wapato children whose parents were traveling separately to the hop fields. The annual migration to work in the hop fields in the Sound area or the Yakima area were generally family trips for those who had families; it was a major economic and cultural activity for Indians all around the area and throughout the state.

October 13, 1892

As an illustration of Indian fidelity to promises, Charlie Wapato, before leaving home for the western Washington hop fields, borrowed \$10 of a citizen of Chelan, which he promised to pay as soon as he returned. He was gone five or six weeks and didn’t make very much either, for when he returned last week he said, “Hiyu hop louse; hiyu Injun; halo chickamen.” Yet the first thing Charlie did was to return the borrowed \$10. Good example for some people whose skins are not copper colored.

January 19, 1892

Charlie Wapato brought in a cord of good wood for the Leader office Monday. He says it will be thirty days more, or thereabouts, before we get a Chinook wind and a break-up of

the present spell of weather. That means about the middle of February. The Indians are often correct in their weather prophecies, but it is to be hoped they are wrong this time. We have had an elegant sufficiency already, although the mercury has not as yet been over two or three degrees below zero in this section.

November 9, 1894

Charley Wapato last week brought to this office—all same Boston man—a good sample of wheat raised by him, also some very good potatoes. Of the latter he says he has for sale 200 sacks at 50 cents per 100 pounds.

June 7, 1895

Charley Wapato brought the first strawberries to market last Saturday.

June 7, 1895

Charley Wapato's team ran away after the ball game was ended last evening and broke his hack up some.

April 30, 1897

Notice for Publication

Land Office at Waterville, Wash.,

April 22, 1897

Notice is hereby given that the following-named settler has filed notice of her intention to make final proof in support of her

claim, and that said proof will be made before United States Land Office at Waterville, Wash., on June 8, 1897, viz:

MATILDA WAPATO, one of the heirs of Quatass or Doctor Jim (an Indian), who made H'd application No. 1085 for the nw $\frac{1}{4}$ sw $\frac{1}{4}$ lot 1, section 14; ne $\frac{1}{4}$ se $\frac{1}{4}$ lots 4 and 5, section 15, twp 28N., R. 21, E.W.M.

She names the following witnesses to prove the continuous residence upon, and cultivation of, said land, viz:

Martin Venneberg, Jay D. Berrier, John Walsh, Wm. Gibson, all of Chelan, Wash.

R. W. Starr, Register

First publication, April 30, 1897.

Last publication, June 4, 1897.

July 22, 1898

The first green corn of the season was brought in Monday by Mrs. Charley Wapato.

October 21, 1898

Mrs. Charley Wapato has returned from the Yakima hop fields.

March 17, 1899

Letter From the Allotments

The following interesting letter from Charley Wapito for publication, found its way to this office by the hand of his son Matthew, on Monday, and speaks for itself.

Chelan, Wash. March 12, '99

Editor The Chelan Leader:

I write you this letter for publication from the allotments. All the children here like the public schools, and they don't want to go away somewhere else to school—and they don't have to. As soon as they get to be of legal age they will be sent to the public schools. The Indians on these allotments pay taxes same as others, to support the schools and they don't want the children to go to the Reservation school. At the same time, the Indians and their children have great respect and liking for the priest. Yours truly, Charley Wapato.

This letter suggests that there was a tug of war over whether the north shore Indian children should attend the local Falls View public school or be sent to the Colville reservation to attend the St. Mary's school run by a Jesuit Catholic priest. It shows Charley stepping in to provide leadership and guidance for the north shore Indians and communicating with the non-Indian community. The north shore Indians, both those holding Moses allotments and those with homesteads, were commonly

referred to in the newspaper as the allotment Indians.

Matthew Wapato, Charley's son, who was eleven years old at this time and had been attending the Falls View public school, may have helped his father put his thoughts into written English.

June 9, 1899

An Old Indian Claim Revived

It is learned from Wapato Charley, one the most intelligent Indian citizens on Lake Chelan, that a move is on foot among the Wenatchee Indians to re-claim a tract of land in the vicinity of Leavenworth, in this county, which formerly belonged to their ancestors. It seems that Charley's wife was a Wenatchee and that many years ago, when the Indians hereabouts, under the leadership of Moses and other chiefs, were at war with the whites, her grandfather, whose name was Hamau, and his people were friendly and did all they could to preserve the peace. In recognition of this latter fact, the government presented Hamau with a reservation consisting of a tract of land eight miles square, lying along the Wenatchee valley—extending four miles on each side of the river of that name, between Mission and Leavenworth and including the townsite of the latter.

After the old chief died, according to Charlie, his descendents abandoned the tract, and at a later date, when the soldiers

came, it seems the Indians agreed to relinquish their right and title to the reserve and take homesteads or allotments elsewhere, and did so.

Now that the tract in question had become pretty well settled by whites and is valuable, some of the descendents have come to the conclusion that they want it back again, and about May 1st of this year John Hamild, who resides near Mission, accompanied by Louie Judge, his cousin, as interpreter, went to Washington to see about it. The authorities—or lawyers—instructed him to return home, and get the names of all the Wenatchee Indians interested, and find out how many of them wanted the land restored to them, and stated that if the heirs were practically unanimous they might succeed in getting it.

As there are quite a number of the Indians interested, and widely scattered, it will be something of a task to round them up. Wapato Charley expresses the opinion that they cannot get the land restored and that nothing will come of the attempt to get it, but there is no telling what the Indian department may do when it comes to restoring to the “poor Indian” his “rights”.

Charley married a Wenatchee Indian woman, Matilda, and lived among the Wenatchee for quite some years, probably from about 1870, before moving to Lake Chelan in 1890. His father-in-law, Doc Jim, seems to have moved from Mission to Lake Chelan in 1887. Charley’s younger brother, Peter, was married

to Matilda's sister, Hyacinth, providing another link to the Wenatchee tribe and their concerns.

June 9, 1899

Last week quite a number of allotment Indians hereabouts went over to Nespilum, on the Colville reservation, to be present at a hiyu potlatch, to be held on Wednesday of this week, at which the effects of the late lamented Chief Moses were to be distributed (as far as they would reach) among his relatives and friends. Our informant, Wapato Charley, whose wife was a cousin of the deceased chief, said that probably 1,000 Indians from all over the northwest, would be there, and that 10 head of cattle would be killed for a grand feast. After the feast would come a period of mourning and (probably more or less simulated) grief, and then the distribution would take place. The festivities will probably last four or five days.

April 19, 1900

Falls View School Report

Falls View school report for month ending April 6th:

Number of pupils enrolled, 26

Number of days present, 516 ½

Number of cases of tardiness, 1

Pupils neither absent nor tardy during the month: Mabel

Green; Ora, Bertha and Susie Caswell; Zada, Ord, Roy and Ralph

Pershall; Jay and Delia Tompkins; Minnie Merwin; Carl and Otto Venneberg; Sohia, Mary, Agatha and Madeline Wapato.

Pupils not absent nor tardy during the six months term: Minnie Mervin; Carl and Otto Venneberg; Zada, Orel and Ralph Pershall; and Jay and Delia Tompkins. Ernest Caswell was neither absent nor tardy during his enrollment. Mabel Green was absent only one-half day.

The Falls View school closed Friday, Apr. 6th, with a picnic which was much enjoyed by all the pupils and a few of the parents who attended.

Francis Hall, Teacher.

In this report Sohia Wapato is Sophia Cecile Ameno, the daughter of allottee Cecile Ameno (MA-13). Cecile Ameno is the daughter of allottee Yokesil (MA-15) and the sister of allottee John Abraham (MA-12), who married Wapato John's younger daughter, Mary Ann. Mary Wapato is probably Marie Wapato, born in 1898, the daughter of Wapato John's second son, Sylvester, and Sylvester's third wife Ellen. Agatha Wapato is the daughter of Sylvester Wapato and Sylvester's second wife, Nancy. And Madeline Wapato is Madeline Clate, the daughter of Clate and his wife Teresa, Indian homesteaders on the north shore. The Indians on the north shore were still in transition in terms of following the European convention of giving their children a first and last name. During this interim

period, north shore Indians were often given the family name of Wapato by the public school, by the newspaper, and in general discussion by non-Indians. Sometimes, as will be seen in the school report of January, 1906, the school used a mother or father's given name as the family name of the child.

July 26, 1900

John B. Wapito, the bright young son of Peter Wapito, who has been attending the Indian school at Carlisle, Pa., for two years past, returned home last Friday, well pleased to be home once more. He had not been on a horse while he was gone and Charley's boy says he has done nothing but ride since he came back.

August 2, 1900

Wapito Charley called last week to order 500 fruit labels printed "all same Boston man."

September 27, 1900

Wapato Charley started Thursday for the Yakima races.

December 6, 1900

Chas. Wapato got five fine deer last week.

December 13, 1900

Falls View Letter

The following named pupils of the Falls View school were promoted: Eddie Merwin, Otto Venneberg, Ray and Ralph

Pershall and Paul Wapato, from the first grade to the second grade; Susie Caswell, Minnie Merwin and Carl Venneberg, from the second to the third grade; Ora and Bertha Caswell from the fourth to the fifth grade.

Paul Wapato was Charley and Matilda's son, born on December 10, 1894, according to his gravestone.

January 3, 1901

Letter From Matthew Wapato

Falls View, Wash., Dec. 23

Dear Sir: I am going to tell you about the new scholar there in Chelan school. His name is Albert Machine, Cecil's boy, who has been to school about 5 years and yet can't add 4 and 8. He was in second grade the last term, that is, this year. His class went to third grade and he did not. His old mother got mad because the teacher never put him in third grade. She wanted her son to be the smartest one in the world, but the boy didn't have much brain, not any more than a young mouse has. The old woman said she heard her boy read at home all right, never made any mistake in reading; but when the boy is reading for the teacher it is just like rope twisted. I could not understand him; and the old mother of his said that the teacher was no good. But I think this teacher is all right. He is the best teacher I ever had. The old woman was mad to the Falls View school and got a third

reader for her son and sent him to Chelan school. Now down there he reads like an old boat that it can't move. At recess the boys clap their hands and said: "We have a new boat in our school." When he reads for the teacher in Falls View he just stand up like an old stiff wood sticking up in the air and won't read. Please put this in the paper. Yours truly, Matthew Wapato.

I'm not sure, after reading this letter, just what Matthew is trying to get across. He likes his teacher at Falls View school and seems to protest accusations against him. He seems critical of the other boy's mother for the way she has handled her boy's apparent difficulties at school. Perhaps what we see here is Matthew's loyalty to his school and his teacher. Matthew is twelve years old at this time.

April 25, 1901

Charley Wapato shipped 40 boxes of apples to Wenatchee this week.

May 9, 1901

Matthew Wapato took a shot at a cinnamon bear on Mitchell creek, near Falls View, last week and wounded it, but did not get it. Later his father and others went out after it but failed to find it. However, they captured a young cayote and brought it home with them. We are indebted for these items to Matthew

himself, who is one of the most intelligent, best educated of our Indian boys hereabouts.

May 30, 1901

To rent, for 6 years, 1 section of land, about a mile from the lake and 8 miles from Chelan; 40 acres fenced with wire, 30 acres plowed; 105 fruit trees, 85 in bearing; lots of berries; 15 acres of rye and wheat sowed last fall, 4 acres of corn and ½ acre of potatoes planted this year; good running creek. The owner, Mrs. Tenas Peter, is too old to live on the place and will give a 6-year lease on it, at \$150 per year. Call on or address Charlie Wapato, Chelan, Wash.

This ad was repeated on June 8 and June 13, 1901. Mrs. Tenas Peter was the wife of allottee Lakayuse (MA-16) and her given name was Mary Ann. Lakayuse was identified as Tenas Peter Wapato in the Chelan Leader in the June 14, 1900, report of his death. Charlie Wapato was assisting Mrs. Tenas Peter in handling the lease of her land. Mr. and Mrs. Tenas Peter were the parents of allottee Louis Ustah (MA-9), who married Wapato John's older daughter, Mary, and of allottee Makai (MA-17), sometimes called Markane, whose wife was also named Mary.

June 6, 1901

Charlie Wapato and his son Matthew have gone to the Mission on the Okanagon to peddle ictas among the Indians.

July 18, 1901

Mrs. Tenas Peter has leased her allotment for five years to A. O. Fowler.

September 26, 1901

Matthew Wapato, one of the brightest Indian boys on the allotments, was reported very sick last week with some kind of fever. Dr. A.I. Mitchell was called to attend him. Later reports are that he is improving.

October 10, 1901

Matthew Wapato, who has been quite sick recently, was well enough to come to town Saturday.

December 19, 1901

Johnnie Wapato and wife returned from their hunt on the Okanagon this week. Johnnie secured seven deer. Hiya muckamuck now at Johnnie's.

January 2, 1902

Johnnie Wapato returned yesterday from Wenatchee, where he went with a load of fat hogs. He received 5 ½ c per pound, alive.

January 16, 1902

One of Mr. Venneberg's children has been quite sick for the past week, also one of Johnnie Wapato's children, but both are about well again.

These three items, not directly about Charles and his family, are included as examples of how the newspaper tended to give all of the north shore Indians the last name of Wapato. These items actually refer to John Abraham, who married Wapato John's younger daughter Mary Ann in 1889. The only actual Johnnie Wapato was Peter Wapato's son, John Baptiste, born in 1881 and who was 20 years old and unmarried at this time.

March 20, 1902

Falls View Items

Charlie Wapato is going up to his Okanogan ranch soon.

Local and General

Chas. Wapato went to the Okanogan river Tuesday to make some improvements on his son Matthew's ranch.

Matthew, born in 1888, was 14 years old at this time. I haven't determined whether Charlie's Okanogan ranch or Matthew's ranch was a Colville reservation allotment, an off-reservation homestead or what.

November 7, 1902

Falls View

Matthew Wapato goes to Wenatchee Friday to stand his trial for alleged horse stealing.

We need to pause here and review the public record provided by the Superior court papers for the case. On September 6, 1902 J.L. Shelton went before Justice of the Peace J.B. Palmer of the Wenatchee Precinct of Chelan County and swore out at complaint against “John Doe and Richard Roe, Indians whose names are unknown.” He charged that on September 5, 1902 two unknown Indians committed the crime of “grand larceny” involving “two head of work horses” taken from his property in Clockum, apparently south of Wenatchee. “A warrant was issued for the apprehension and arrest of the said John Doe whose true name is Mathew Wapito and placed in the hands of F.J. Keller, Sheriff of Chelan Co.” On September 19, 1902 “the prisoner was brought into court.” “The evidence in the case was heard and the prisoner held to answer in the Superior court to charges in the complaint. The prisoner’s bond was placed at three hundred dollars and on failing to make a bond the prisoner was committed to jail.” On November 19, 1902 the case was heard in Superior court in Wenatchee before a jury. The verdict was as follows:

*In the Superior court of the State of Washington in and for
Chelan county,*

State of Washington, Plaintiff

Mathew Wapito, Defendant

Verdict

*We the Jury empanelled and sworn to try the above entitled
case find the defendant Not Guilty.*

J.A. Lantham, Foreman

No testimony given in the trial or jury deliberations are included in the Superior court file on the case. There is no indication of how Mathew Wapato was identified as the John Doe in the complaint, and there is no mention of who the Richard Roe in the complaint may be. If Mathew was, indeed, John Doe, it is possible that Richard Roe was his cousin Louie since the two were the same age, both having been born in 1888, both being 14 years old at this time.

December 19, 1902

To the Public

*Notice is hereby given that after this date I will not be
responsible for or pay any bills or indebtedness my son,
Matthew Wapato, contracts or makes. And I hereby warn the
public against buying cattle or horses from him.*

Dated this 15th day of December, 1902.

Charlie Wapato.

It appears that Charlie had doubts about Matthew's honesty and trustfulness. He probably had the truth from his son about the horse stealing incident and the identity of the mysterious Richard Roe.

January 23, 1903

Taken Up

By the undersigned, about January 7, 1903, the following described strays, towit:

One black Jersey bull calf, a year old coming spring, notch on under side of right ear, no visible brand.

One sorrel colt, coming two years old in spring, small white spot in forehead, no visible brand.

The owner, or owners, is hereby notified to prove property, pay charges and take them away, otherwise they will be sold according to law.

Dated this 13th day of January, 1903, at Allotments on Lake Chelan, Wash.

Peter Wapato.

I wonder if Mathew's trial for horse theft as John Doe and the unknown Richard Roe (possibly Peter's son Louie) in that trial had anything to do with Peter's concern to make publicly clear that these animals that he was holding were strays and not his and should be claimed by their rightful owners. Perhaps Peter wished to close off the possibility that someone might bring theft charges against them. Louie, already a bright boy, may have suggested this move. And John Baptiste, literate in English and the white man's laws, may have drafted the statement.

November 27, 1903

It was rumored in town last week that Matthew Wapato had been killed near Seattle, but no one here could be found who knew anything about it and there was probably nothing in it.

Months after being jailed and undergoing a trial for stealing two work horses and being acquitted on the charges in November, 1902, Matthew apparently left home. He was 15 years old in 1903.

December 18, 1903

A card from Matthew Wapato dated December 9th, to his father states that he is at Fort Simcoe on the Yakima reservation going to school and having a nice time.

Matthew would have relatives on the Yakima reservation through his grandfather, Doc Jim, who was, according to Mary Kerr, originally from the Yakima tribe.

February 24, 1904

The Wapatoes in Line.

Mr. A.F. Cox contributes the following:

We are glad to notice that our native Americans—the Wapatoes—are taking great interest in the coming exposition at Portland. Charlie Wapato has already delivered at the Chelan Produce Co.'s warehouse some boxes of very fine Black Ben Davis apples and Charlie's friends will be along with other stuff for exhibition. We hope that all our neighbors of the Chelan valley will be prompt in looking over their stock of fruits, etc., so as to get as large, full and varied an assortment of Chelan valley products as possible and report the same to the Lake Chelan Fair Association at Chelan.

August 26, 1904

It is learned that a small child of Charley Wapato's was buried on Wednesday. The cause of its death was not ascertained.

I haven't identified who this child could be. Perhaps Matilda had a child who died at birth or soon thereafter without having received a name.

July 14, 1905

While holding horses for a handicap race on the Chelan course Thursday afternoon of last week, Charlie Wapato was knocked down and run over and very seriously injured. His collar bone was broken and his shoulder smashed, three ribs were broken, and one bone in his leg below the knee was also broken. Dr. Wentworth was called and attended to his injuries and on Saturday Charlie was carried aboard the steamer Belle of Chelan and taken to Green's Landing, near his home at Falls View. For a time it was thought he was fatally hurt, but it is learned that he is improving and will probably live. Charlie is one of the best Indians hereabouts and has many "Boston" friends who hope for his recovery.

July 21, 1905

Charley Wapato, who was so badly injured during the Fourth of July celebration, is reported to be rapidly recovering from his injuries.

August 11, 1905

On Saturday Charlie Wapato was able to come to town in a buggy, and seems to be getting well of his injuries pretty fast. He says his shoulder is pretty sore yet, but that his ribs were not broken—only bent—neither was his leg broken, as reported at first.

January 12, 1906

Chas. Wapato has been hauling alfalfa to Chelan this week.

January 19, 1906

Falls View

Special to The Leader

Following is a list of pupils neither absent nor tardy for the month ending January 12th:

Florence Miller, Emma Venneberg, Anna Wapato, Madeline Clate, Sophia Cecile, Frank Wapato, Carl Venneberg, Otto Venneberg, Willie Venneberg.

Those tardy but not absent were:

Esther Tynan, Joy Tynan, Icatha Sylvester, Newell Wapato.

Hulda E. Thorson, Teacher.

District No. 19, Chelan County.

By this time the public school is beginning to sort out the parentage of the "Wapato" students. Anna Wapato may be Charlie and Matilda's daughter Agnes, born in 1899. Mrs. Lloyd Watson in her "History of Manson Community" refers to Agnes as Annie. And in a 1962 interview with Lucy Evans and Margaret Wapato, James Lindston of the Lake Chelan Museum refers to Charles and Matilda's daughter as Annie. Sylvester Wapato and his third wife, Ellen, had a daughter Anna Marie who was born in 1901, but I think she would have been a bit

young for school. Madeline Clate is the daughter of homesteaders Clate and Teresa. Sophia Cecile is allottee Cecile Ameno's daughter. Frank Wapato is Charlie and Matilda's son, born December 14, 1895. Icatha Sylvester is Agatha Wapato, the daughter of Sylvester Wapato and his second wife, Nancy. Agatha was born in 1890 and her mother died in 1893. Newell Wapato is Noel Ustah, born in 1898. He was the son of Louis Ustah and Mary Wapato Ustah. He may have used the name Newell during his life but his headstone at St. Mary's Mission in Omak reads Noel Ustah Wapato. Apparently he felt a strong connection with the Wapato family name.

January 26, 1906

Leave Them Indians

Commissioner Leupp of Indian Affairs Against Higher Education

*The Indian should be an Indian and
nothing more.*

So says

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp in his annual report. He does not believe the Indians should be educated for higher professions in the great colleges of the country to the neglect of his sound and practical learning.

I include this item to illustrate the prejudice that was common at the highest levels of national affairs against higher education and the professions for Indians. This common prejudice helps explain some name changes that took place with Charles and

Matilda's two younger boys, Paul and Frank, which we will get to later.

February 16, 1906

Falls View

Chas. Wapato got the start of all of us. He saw the eclipse of the moon. Thursday night.

"No light in the window for him."

Chas. Wapato had the sad mishap of running his head against the bracket lamp.

February 16, 1906

Little Field Wapato received a gift of a pretty red dress from Mrs. Field at the head of the lake.

I haven't figured out for sure who Little Field Wapato was. I'm inclined to think that the most probable choice is Charlie and Matilda's daughter, Annie, born in 1899. She would have been between six and seven years old at this time. And since Charlie is the most written-about Wapato in the Chelan Leader it seems likely that his daughter would be mentioned.

April 20, 1906

Notice

For the past 13 years the undersigned has not collected rent from Mrs. Peter Wapato for the use of orchard, but gives notice

that this year, and every year hereafter, she is expected to pay \$5.00 a year. Dated this 14th day of April, 1906. Matilda Wapato.

This notice was repeated in the April 27 issue of the newspaper. Thirteen years before would have been in 1893. This suggests to me that Quatas, or Doc Jim, who homesteaded the property died in 1893. According to Matilda's children, Charley and Matilda came to Lake Chelan from Mission or Cashmere at Doc Jim's request to care for him and operate his homestead.

May 4, 1906

To the Public

The Leader of the 27th inst. had a little notice about my renting an orchard for thirteen years or so, but I have owned the said land 19 years. The orchard was planted 18 years ago. The land was given to me by my father, now deceased. Matilda Wapato sold her homestead and cannot take another one according to the laws of the United States. Mrs. Peter Wapato.

This suggests that her father, Doc Jim, came to the north shore 19 years before, or in 1887. The orchard she planted was probably quite small, as the early Indian fruit orchards are described, so the plot of land she refers to Doc Jim "giving her" was probably very small. Doc Jim never transferred title to this plot of his land or any other part of his homestead to anyone.

Title to the 168.4 acre homestead remained in Doc Jim's name until Matilda made her final proof on the homestead in 1897. Mrs. Peter Wapato or Hyacinth or Yacine signed a quit claim deed before a notary public on the former Doc Jim homestead in 1902, relinquishing any claim to any part of the property.

June 8, 1906

A Chelanite Abroad

The following letter, written by Mr. John Walsh, who is now visiting his old home in New York state, is one of the wittiest and most interesting letters ever received by The Leader, and we take the liberty to print it herewith:

Geneseo, N.Y., May 26, 1906

Chelan Leader, Chelan, Wash. Dear Britt:

[The early part of the letter is omitted.]

Land here sells for about one-half what it did when I left here 26 years ago, from \$40 to \$75 per acre, and it won't pay 4 per cent on that. Charley Wapato could grow more truck and fruit on his ranch than you could on a section of the best land in this county.

Well, as that is about all I can think of, I will close with regards to all.

Yours truly, John Walsh, Geneseo, N.Y.

June 8, 1906

Falls View

Charley Wapato is going to have a new hay shed. Mr. Venneberg and Mahler are doing the work.

June 22, 1906

Falls View

Charley Wapato's hay shed blew over the other night when we had the big wind.

Messrs. Parker, Venneberg, Mahler and Smith are re-building Charley's hay shed.

July 6, 1906

Charley Wapato left last Saturday with his running horses for Loomis, where he expected to take part in the Fourth of July races.

August 17, 1906

Capt. John McA. Webster, Indian agent on the Colville reservation, and Dr. E.H. Latham, government physician stationed at Nespelem, were here this week to inquire into the dispute over the ownership of the land on which Charley Wapato's family reside, for the purpose of making a report to the interior department at Washington. A hearing was given the parties concerned at Lakeside on Tuesday [August 8], which was continued over Wednesday [August 9] forenoon. The

matter is now in the superior court and the department has no jurisdiction; it can only act as advisor and intermediary

August 17, 1906

Charlie Wapato, one of the most industrious and best respected of the Chelan Indians, is dead; and his nephew, Louie Wapato, is in the hands of the law and must answer for his death.

The tragedy occurred last Saturday evening between eight and nine o'clock on the public highway near the Indian allotments about eight miles west of Chelan. While Charley Wapato, the victim, was driving home in an empty hay rack, he was overtaken by his nephew, John B. Wapato, who rode up on horseback. The long-standing quarrel was renewed and blows followed. While they were thus engaged, Peter Wapato, father of John B. and a half-brother to Charley, came up and took part in the fight. He knocked Charley down and pounded him into insensibility. At this time Joe Mishka, one of Charlie's white neighbors, and John Abraham, another Indian [and brother-in-law to Charlie and Peter] took charge of Charley and his team and started to drive them home. A mile farther on they were overtaken by Louie Wapato, a younger son of Peter's, who rode up and deliberately fired into the prostrate body of the injured Indian, with a 30 caliber rifle. The bullet entered the breast near the base of the neck and passed entirely through the chest, causing instant death.

These are substantially the facts as testified to at the inquest by Joe Mishka and his wife, who was an unwilling witness to a part of the tragic enactments and who alone of all the witnesses, except his own wife, could give a lucid and detailed account of the affair, and by John Abraham, who was the only witness to the shooting.

It is not unlikely that Louie will not be held alone responsible for the killing. The remains of the deceased showed that the beating administered before the shooting occurred had been merciless. The features were pounded almost out of semblance to a human countenance.

The above is an extract from the longer article of August 17 and consists of paragraphs 2, 5, 6 and 13. It includes all of the reported testimony given at the inquest and Editor DeWitt's opinion that Peter and John Baptiste also have responsibility his Charlie's death.

Charley's body was examined by Dr. Henry W. Wentworth, who was also subpoenaed to testify at Louie's first-degree murder trial the following November. Peter Wapato and his son John B. were never charged. Louie was found guilty of manslaughter and given a five-year prison sentence, suspended because of his youth but conditioned on good behavior. The quarrel mentioned referred to a lawsuit that Peter and Hyacinth had filed on May 22, 1906, seeking one-third of Charlie and

Matilda's ranch. Hyacinth wanted to withdraw a quit claim deed she signed before a notary public on August 23, 1902, giving up any claim to her father's Lake Chelan homestead. The case had not yet been argued in court but Peter seems to have been pessimistic about his chances of winning because just a few days before the murder the Indian Agent from Nespelem was brought to town and asked to intervene, apparently on Peter's behalf. The Indian Agent met with the parties in Lakeside on August 7 and 8 but told them he had no authority over the case. Perhaps this is what set Peter and his sons on a murderous path, although the murder of Charlie had no effect on the status of Matilda's homestead. Peter, John B. and Louie seem to have left no record explaining their motives or roles in the beating and murder of Charlie. Peter and Hyacinth's lawsuit over Matilda's ranch fell fallow but was not withdrawn.

Matilda On Her Own

The Chelan Leader, November 9, 1906 (repeated on November 16)

Notice

Those indebted to Mrs. Matilda Wapato for breeding cows, in the sum of \$2.00 each, are requested to call and pay up during this month.

Paul Wapito

The Republic, November 29, 1906

County Blotter

Many Minor Transactions Recorded at Court House for Past Week

Lease, Matilda Wapato to Columbia & Okanogan Nursery company, nw ¼ of sw ¼, lot 1, section 14, ne ¼ se ¼, lots 4, 5, section 15, twp 28, range 21, \$400.

The Chelan Leader, December 21, 1906

Notice

Those who own hay on the farm of Matilda Wapito should come and take it away soon, as the wind blew the shed down on the hay and the whole is covered with snow. Mrs. Wapito is unable to take care of it.

Paul Wapito

February 8, 1907 (repeated on February 15 and February 22)

For Sale

Several cows, horses and cayuses. Three race horses, named respectively Mac, Eclipse and Baby, the buckskin mare. Mac is good for two miles, Eclipse for ½ mile; Baby for ¼ mile. Apply soon to 28-31p.

Matilda Wapato

April 26, 1907

Mrs. Matilda Wapato left with her family yesterday morning for the Colville reservation where she will occupy a piece of land and claim it as an allotment for her children when the reservation lands are parceled out to the Indians. The C. & O. Nursery company has her ranch on Wapato lake under lease for a number of years and will use it as a nursery.

In the spring of 1910 Matilda filed a petition with the court to dismiss the Peter and Hyacinth lawsuit over her ranch for want of prosecution. After listening to lawyers on both sides the judge dismissed the case on June 2, 1910, freeing Matilda to sell the ranch with an unchallenged title.

We pick up the narrative of Matilda's life in a letter of remembrance, published in the Okanogan County Heritage in 1995, written by Dora Storhow (later Meeker), in which she refers to Matilda's daughter Agnes as Christine. I haven't found anywhere else where Agnes is called Christine, so this may be error of memory or perhaps Agnes was sometimes called Christine.

In 1904 we lived about four miles up the lake from Chelan and the Wapatos lived farther up the lake....

We had a rail fence around our house, which proved very useful to my two brothers and me. We could see the road for a half mile both ways. Someone would say "The Indians are coming,"

and we would run to the fence and be lined up like so many crows. That was where we received our first Chinook lessons.

The Wapatos would always stop and talk with us. They would teach us something when they went to town and stop to see if we had remembered when they returned.

We moved to Okanagon in 1907. We lost touch with the Wapatos then. Then in about 1914 or 1915, I met Matilda on the street in Okanagon. Matilda had been Charley's wife. She seemed delighted. She said "Milka tenas kluchman cuppa Chelan!" (You are the good little squaw from Chelan!) She had moved to a place between Okanagon and St. Mary's Mission. She had moved there to be near her two boys who were in school at the Mission. Christine, her little girl, was not in school yet. She may have been old enough, but she had tuberculosis so I don't think she ever went to school.

My father had a livery and feed stable in Okanagon. Matilda and Christine came to town almost every day. She rode a mare that had a young colt and Christine rode the colt. The colt was so swaybacked that a saddle was not necessary. Matilda always led the colt. She always put them in the stable and ordered hay and grain for them, even though they were only in for a couple of hours or so. She never paid each time. Every month when I presented the statement to her, we would have a seemingly bitter quarrel. She would tell me that I was a very

bad person and I might go to hell because I took all her money and her children were starving to death. I would tell her that the reason her children were dying was because she was too mean and lazy to feed them. Then she would laugh and pay what I asked. She kept her money tied up in a red bandana in a deep pocket in her petticoat. She would unwrap a roll of bills as large as her wrist. She would always pay me what I asked and then tell me I was a good little squaw.

I did not see Matilda for a few years. I had married and we were living at the forks of Beaver and Frazer Creeks in the Methow Valley. One evening quite late in the fall, my husband and the hired man had finished the evening chores. When they came to the house there was a teepee pitched about 30 feet from our house and two horses tied to our yard fence. It was Matilda. They didn't know her, or she them. She would not say a word. I heard them and switched on the porch light. She saw me and again I became the good little squaw from Chelan. Since the men could not speak Chinook, she didn't see any reason to say anything to them.

They took her horses to the barn and fed them, and brought hay to put on the ground of her teepee. I invited her to come into the house but she refused, so I took hot meals to her. We sat on the hay and visited. She said she was on her way up Beaver Creek to get a certain kind of willow to weave into baskets.



Virginia Ramm and Matilda Wapato near Twisp about 1921.

(Photo from Okanogan Heritage magazine, Winter 1995)

She told me both her boys were far away in the East and Christine had died, so she was all alone.

She stayed with us two days before she went up there three days and came back and stayed three days more. Each time she left she rolled the hay up in blankets and took it along.

The morning she left I watched her going up the hill leading the patient old pack horse. That was the last time I saw her. She was a good friend. I wished her well.

Matilda's daughter Agnes was born August 2, 1899 and died October 3, 1915 at the age of 16. She is buried in the St. Mary's Mission Cemetery at Omak under the name Agnes Wapato.

Mary Kerr is the daughter of pioneers of the Methow Valley, Mr. and Mrs. William and Grace Thurlow. She collected historical facts and anecdotes which she published in September, 1969, in the Okanogan County Heritage magazine under the title "Matilda Wapato: An Indian Woman's Life." Of Matilda she writes:

Her father was Doctor Jim or Quatas, a Yakima Indian. Her mother was Agnes, Yip-yip-in-Wat of the Wenatchees. When first married, Matilda and Charley lived in the Wenatchee country. Quatas, enfeebled with age, asked Matilda to live on his homestead and care for him. She did this in 1890. She and

Charley developed the tract into one of the outstanding farms of that time.

Mary quotes a description of their tract from a newspaper story.

The farm is situated ten miles from Chelan at the north end of Wapato Lake. It consists of alfalfa and fruit land of the finest quality and is well watered by a small stream flowing down from the hills. The land is well improved, having a good house, barn and outbuildings. There is a fine, bearing orchard on the place....

Matilda's son Frank provided Mary Kerr with the following information:

After Charley's death, Matilda and family moved to Frank's (Paschal) allotment about two miles from Okanogan, near St. Mary's Mission. She built a house, barn and other buildings and raised hay for her horses. Her income was derived from sale of the ranch near Chelan and sale or lease of inherited lands on the Colville and Yakima reservations.

The children with Matilda at the time of the move included sons Paul and Frank and daughter Agnes. The oldest boy, Matthew, had gone to the Yakima reservation in late 1903, where his mother had relatives, to finish his schooling.

Frank described Matilda's life on the north shore of Lake Chelan as follows:

Her work was that of a housewife on a farm. From white neighbors she early learned to prepare white man's dishes; how to can fruit, make butter and how to make the most of life on a diversified farm. For fun she did not have conventional sessions at bridge and such games. She had a humorous turn of mind and contrived to make life pleasant for herself and others. She enjoyed visits from neighbors, white and Indian.

Mary Kerr writes the following of Matilda's later years:

Matilda's last years were spent mostly in her home near Okanogan. Many times she went alone or with Indian friends on hop-picking trips to Yakima or up the Methow River to catch and dry salmon. These were not so much necessities, but excuses to visit old friends and scenes.

This was the time I knew her. Every fall, after huckleberry time, when potatoes were being harvested, she would drive her wire-patched buggy into our yard. She set up her tent. At breakfast time she entered our house, clean, in her best traveling garb.

By the kerosene lamp, over leisurely cups of coffee, she and Mother would talk about their children. Mother knew a little Chinook. Matilda had a little English. With gestures she would tell how she peck-peck-pecked one of her boys on the head with

her finger because he was slow with arithmetic problems. How she and Mother talked and laughed!

Mrs. Vieh [Mrs. Howard Vieh of Okanogan] found Matilda alone in her last illness at the Okanagon ranch home. She brought her to the hospital where she died Christmas Eve in 1932. Matilda is buried in the cemetery of St. Mary's Mission, near Omak, beside her daughter, Agnes.

Howard Phelps, an Okanogan National Forest Administrative Assistant living at Twisp at the time he knew Matilda Wapato, published the following memorial essay in the June, 1962, issue of Timber-Lines, a United States Forest Service publication.

In the early days of the Century, the site of the Twisp Ranger Station was a favorite fall camping place for Indian women who came to trade for deer skins from which to make moccasins and gloves. During the years we lived at the Station, in the Twenties, Matilda Wapato came up every fall from the Chelan country, camped on a corner of the Station grounds, and exchanged her skill at moccasin and glove making for deer hides. The first time she camped there, in an old battered lodge, the poles of which were covered with a weathered assortment of canvas and hides, my wife asked if it would be considered proper and in accordance with Indian custom to call upon her. I assured her that it could do no harm and might be welcome. Armed with a home-made cake as a peace offering,

we accordingly called upon the old woman and her companion, another old Indian woman of about Matilda's age.

We, and the cake, received a warm welcome. We found the two old women sitting on opposite sides of a small fire in the center of the lodge. A pot of meat stew was bubbling over the flames. Both were busily scraping the hair and meat from deer skins. The dirt floor of the lodge was well sprinkled with tufts of deer hair, and I surmised that the stew was seasoned with it as well. A place was made for us beside the fire, the cake was sampled, and we were made to feel very welcome.

Thus began a friendship between my wife and Matilda Wapato which lasted through our years at Twisp. Every fall the old woman, usually with a companion, would appear and pitch her lodge for a stay of two or three weeks. Every year she would welcome my wife and her peace offering. Bea's home-made bread was especially relished. Matilda was blind in one eye, and her eyes were weeping and inflamed from countless smokey lodge fires. She traveled behind a gaunt Indian pony hitched to a battered buckboard, usually with another pony trailing behind. We never found out how she lived the rest of the year, but we surmised that she had resources well beyond the pony and the buckboard and the lodge, and that her fall camping trips were in a way a vacation and a reversion to tribal custom. She had a son who was a college graduate and a

reporter on the Wenatchee World, so we were told. She always carried a letter from her son in the bosom of her dress, which she would ask my wife to read to her over and over.

Our daughter learned to walk in Indian moccasins made by the patient fingers of Matilda Wapato, and soft, lovely little moccasins they were.

By now, I surmise that Matilda has gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds of her ancestors. My wife and I remember with nostalgia the days when she gave them color and interest, and we hope that she now has a comfortable lodge, a bubbling pot, and many soft deer skins from which to make moccasins for her celestial grandchildren.

Charles and Matilda's Children

Matthew Wapato

Mary Kerr reports that Charles and Matilda's oldest son, Matthew, who was born near Cashmere in 1888 and left Lake Chelan for the Yakima reservation in 1903, attended school at Fort Simcoe on the reservation and became a carpenter. She reports that Matthew died in his early thirties. But Matthew was dead before January, 1912, when testimony was taken on Wapato John's heirs and John B. Wapato testified in that hearing that Matthew had died "over one year ago." Matthew

appears to have died at about 22 years of age. No one tells how he died or why he died so young.

Agnes Wapato

The only daughter, Agnes, was born at Lake Chelan in 1899 and died of tuberculosis at Omak in 1915, at 16 years of age.

Paul and Frank Wapato

Two other sons, Paul (born December 10, 1894) and Frank (born December 14, 1895), like Matthew and perhaps Agnes, attended Falls View school in their youth. In a lengthy newspaper article published upon Paul's death in 1955, we read that Charles would "take his sons on his knees and would paint a vivid picture of the academic success of the sons of his white neighbors. He consistently urged his sons to seek learning." In early 1907, following their father's death, both boys accompanied their mother to the Colville reservation where they both attended the St. Mary's Mission school run by the Jesuit Catholic order under the direction of Father Etienne de Rouge, a highly educated son of a French Count who left France to pursue spiritual and educational goals on the American frontier.

Paul Wapato

The older of the two, Paul, stayed at St. Mary's school probably until the school year of 1909, when he returned to the public



Paul Wapato, rear center, on Wenatchee YMCA basketball team in 1914

schools, first in Chelan in 1909 and later in Wenatchee in 1912, where he graduated from high school in 1916 at the age of 21. The Wenatchee World article of June 9, 1955, summarizes Paul's life, based mostly on an unpublished autobiography. I use this narrative in what follows, interrupted from time to time with other source material. Beginning with his return to public school the narrative says:

Paul got his elementary education at Chelan, living first with relatives, then working in a rooming house, sweeping and scrubbing floors and doing other work. With a white friend, he joined a Methodist youth group and later became a member of the church.

The Methodist youth group referred to was the Epworth League, very active at this time.

He went to high school at Wenatchee, where he was an outstanding all-sports athlete. Again he worked at a boarding house. His day started at 4:30 a.m. with the boarding house work, followed by school, football, basketball or baseball turnout, then more work until 9 at night, then studies. He'd now decided he would become a lawyer.

I found two brief stories and two photos including Paul on the 1914-1915 Wenatchee YMCA basketball team. The Young Men's Christian Association was a non-denominational organization open to young men, and young women since

1913, intended to build leadership and good character and provide athletic opportunities.

After graduation he worked for a year for college money, and then entered Willamette University in 1917. There, too, he was an athlete.

On August 21, 1919, when Paul was 24 years old and about to enter his junior year at Willamette University, we learn this from the Chelan Valley Mirror:

Paul Wapato gave a pleasing talk to the largest audience yet gathered at the Manson church. Paul, whose childhood was spent on Lake Chelan is a good speaker and gives promise of a brilliant future.

The Willamette University website tells us:

In 1834 missionary Jason Lee came to the Oregon Territory to establish a Methodist mission for Native Americans living in the Willamette Valley. While a few Indians took advantage of the education offered by the missionaries to learn English and hence become more effective treaty negotiators in the years that followed, most Indians found little of value in what the missionaries had to offer. In the early 1840s, the missionaries began to shift their focus from serving the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest to serving the rapidly increasing number of white settlers. In 1841 construction of the Indian Manual

Labor Training School began on what is now the Willamette University campus. Because of its failure to thrive, in 1844 the Methodist Mission Board closed the mission, and the building that had previously housed the Manual Labor School was sold to the trustees of the Oregon Institute to be used for the children of missionaries and settlers. The building that remained on the University campus was renamed the Oregon Institute. It housed the first session of the legislature to meet in Salem and sheltered the first court in the territory under the auspices of the United States. It is this institute that finally became Willamette University. Willamette University is closely associated with the beginning of law and government in the historical Oregon Territory, which now comprises Oregon, Washington, Idaho and part of Montana and Wyoming. It educated many of the Northwest's first leaders, artists and business people. Willamette established the first law school (1833) and the first school of medicine (1866) in the Pacific Northwest, which later merged with the medical school of the University of Oregon. Willamette is one of the earliest coeducational institutions in the United States, and its first graduate was a woman. Women were attending the school of medicine as early as 1877.

The university website has a photo of Paul in his basketball uniform posing outdoors with a basketball in his hands as if prepared to shoot the ball. Returning to the 1955 narrative:

He graduated in 1921 with his cherished degree in law.

During his last two years of college, he had worked as a reporter for the Salem, Ore., Morning Statesman, during summer vacation. When he graduated he took a job with the Portland News, later came onto the news staff of the Daily World and the Spokane Chronicle.

The Washington State University Digital Collections online provides several newspaper articles written by Paul or about him. For example, here are some quotes from the July 19, 1926, Spokane Chronicle:

Newest Chronicle Reporter Has Experience. Six feet one inch tall and weighing 180 pounds. Wearing a pleasant smile, [he] stepped into the Chronicle editorial department bright and early this morning. He is one of two of the only known real Indian newspaper men in the United States. And Wapato isn't a "newspaper cub," as he has been racing the keys on a newspaper typewriter for four years on the Portland News and Wenatchee Daily World. Wapato's father might well be called the pioneer in Indian civilization in the northwest, because long before Young Wapato could remember, his dad became a naturalized citizen of the United States, secured a homestead in the Wenatchee valley and started his sons to public school. [Paul's] athletic ability won him honors in basketball, baseball

and football. Wapato started his football career as a high school player on the Wenatchee high school team.”

In the July 22, 1926 Chronicle we read this:

Wapato Speaks To Lions’ Club. The love of the Indian for his home and the desire of the Indian to live the full life of the American citizen was expressed by Paul G. Wapato, full blood Indian newspaper man, member of the Chronicle editorial staff, in a talk before members of the Spokane Central Lions club today noon at the Davenport [Hotel].

And in the Spokesman Review of May 29, 1927, we read this:

Keller Salmon Day Dramatic. 2500 Are Attending. Wild West Bronco Event To Feature—Paul Wapato Talks to Tribes.

Returning again to the 1955 narrative of Paul’s life:

As a Chronicle reporter he covered a meeting of the Northwest Indian Congress. While there he also plunged into discussions of Indian matters, and by the time the congress had adjourned, he had been elected president, a job he was to hold four years.

The Chelan Valley Mirror of March 22, 1928, has this story:

Paul G. Wapato, formerly of this valley, but now of Spokane, and who is president of the Northwest Indian Congress, has severed his connections with a newspaper, for whom in the past he has been writing; and is now devoting all his time to the

establishment of an Indian magazine of which he will be editor in chief.

Back once again to the 1955 narrative.

Next he had the idea of creating a quarterly magazine of Indian affairs. He was offered money from a Spokane bank to found it, and went off to the Yakima reservation to begin gathering story material. He'd signed notes, initialed by the bank president, to gather money for the prospective magazine. One day he picked up a newspaper and read the bank had gone into bankruptcy.

Before the floor fell out of his plan for an Indian magazine Paul traveled western Washington, partly in his role as President of the Northwest Indian Congress and partly to gather material for his proposed magazine. On June 15, 1928 a Hoquiam newspaper wrote:

Wapato Visit Recalls Historic Grid Battle On Heerman's Field. Hoquium, June 15. The visit here today of Paul Wapato, president of the Pacific Northwest Indian Congress, recalls for many old-timers here the spectacular football game between Hoquium and Wenatchee for the state championship in 1914. Wapato, giant of an otherwise full-grown Wenatchee eleven, was the chief threat of the visitors. Football fans still remember his spectacular play at the end for the visiting team. He stands about six foot four. Though Wenatchee put up a great battle, Hoquiam, coached then by Johnny Ehrhart, won the game by 7

to 3. Wapato, according to members of the Chamber of Commerce, before whom he spoke this noon, is now even better at oratory than he used to be at playing football. He delivered a fine speech, they declared. He stopped here on his way to a tribal meeting at Taholah.

On June 18, 1928, in a newspaper article on the Taholah Council meeting, we read this:

Hoquiam, June 18. [There was] an eloquent address by Paul Wapato, Indian publisher and president of the Northwest Indian Congress. Wapato's address to the tribesmen was held by the Indians to have been the outstanding event of the two-day pow-wow, as his eloquence and the earnestness of his appeal for organization made a deep impression on all of those present. He stressed the necessity of unified effort in settling the problems confronting the race and held that work and earnest effort offered the only solution of the present condition of all tribes. His address inspired similar brief expressions from members of the tribes in conference, including Harry Shale, Frank Mounts and Mrs. Cleveland Jackson.

On June 20, 1928, Paul wrote a letter, including the two previous newspaper clipping, from Moclips, Washington, to a friend, Kirby Billingsley, who had attended the University of Washington and then entered the field of journalism. Paul writes:

Dear Kirby,

By this time I presume you have again placed your brogans on the steps that will lead you to the top of the ladder in the journalistic field. Of course, I am taking the liberty to assume that you discovered several ladders that would take you to the top while you were attending the University of Washington.

I left Wenatchee the following Wednesday after you returned to Wenatchee, and after spending a day in Seattle. I have been imbibing both local color and local Indian news articles here since then. I plan to leave here Thursday morning for Seattle, and I shall remain there until Saturday morning when I shall leave for Yakima where I shall sojourn for a week or ten days. I expect to be in Yakima on June 25 for the second half of the conference that was called by the Yakima Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of discussing ways and means of modifying the regulations governing the leasing of Indian lands on the Yakima reservation. Then I may remain there to address the annual picnic of the Yakima Indian Commercial club which will be held this year at White Swan on July 4th. As far as I am concerned, however, the latter date is not definite.

I am enclosing you a couple of clippings out of several that appeared in the columns of the Aberdeen and Hoquiam papers. I have also in my collection clippings that appeared in the columns of the Portland Oregonian and the Seattle P.I. After

reading the article referring to the time when I played a stellar football game on Heerman field at Hoquiam in 1914 as a member of the Wenatchee high school football team I wish that you might mail it back to me at Yakima in care of General Delivery, as I wish to save it for my scrap book. The other clipping you may retain, as I have another one. Some of the Hoquiam business men remembered me as a football player, so my brief appearance before the chamber luncheon proved to be quite interesting to them. The chamber asked me to come back again and give them a longer talk, and I may do this later in the fall. Well, how does it seem to get back into harness again; be sure to write to me immediately at Yakima, General Delivery, as I would like to hear from you next week while I am there.

Your friend, [signed] Paul G. Wapato

After learning of the bankruptcy of the Spokane bank which had been funding his efforts to start an Indian affairs magazine, Paul did a lot of soul-searching as to what to do next. We rejoin the 1955 narrative.

He went on to join some life-long friends, a man and wife, in The Dalles, where they offered services at the Nazarene church. He preached there every night for two and a half weeks, and that launched him on a 25-year career of evangelistic work that was to take him on regular tours to followers in 36 states.

In 1932 he married an evangelistic singer he's met in Mountain Home, Idaho, Elizabeth Wilbert. They traveled together until their family began growing. In 1949, Rev. Wapato came to Twisp for services and the family decided to take up permanent residence in the Methow valley. They settled in Winthrop, their home ever since.

The birthplaces of the six Wapato children indicate the scope of Paul's travels. The two oldest, Paul and Tim, were born in Chicago; Titus was born in Kalispell, Mont.; James arrived in Phoenix, Phillip in Detroit and Esther in Puyallup.

With summer experience in the newspaper business before graduating from college with a law degree, Paul pursued journalism for about six years. During his college years we know he was an effective public speaker, as he was praised for his talk at the Manson Community church during a visit to Manson between his sophomore and junior years. He had previously joined the Methodist church when attending school in Chelan before moving to Wenatchee for high school. In Wenatchee he was associated with the Young Men's Christian Association. And his university, Willamette university, was founded by Methodists. While attending the Northwest Indian congress for the Spokane Chronicle, his leadership and speaking abilities were recognized and he was made president of the Northwest Indian congress for a four-year period. This

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increased his public speaking engagements. When his goal of founding a magazine devoted to Indian affairs collapsed with the funding, his own account suggests that he visited a pastor friend and his wife and tested out his ability to combine his recognized speaking abilities with his long-time engagement with Methodist and Protestant religion to create a new career for himself as an independent, traveling pastor and speaker. His instincts in this regard seem to have been accurate and his career successful. He had found his niche in life.

Following are some news clippings from over the years of Paul's ministry. On September 9, 1937, the Spokesman Review had a notice from Libby, Montana, dated September 18:

Indian Will Preach. Paul G. Wapato, Indian evangelist, will return September 29 to open another Bible conference. He will be accompanied by his wife and three sons.

On April 29, 1943, the Chelan Valley Mirror ran the following story with one photograph of Paul:

Paul G. Wapato, full-blood Wenatchee Indian ex-president of the Northwest Indian congress, former special writer for the Chronicle and former member of the Sparklers basketball team, will return to Spokane to lead a "Back-to-the-Bible" series of services at Union Park Baptist church, starting Tuesday and continuing through April 25. The Rev. Eugene C. Knuth is host-pastor. Wapato is known as one of the outstanding Indian

leaders in America. Following his graduation from Willamette university in Salem, Oregon, he was on the editorial staff of the Portland News. From there he went to Wenatchee on the Wenatchee Daily World, until he came to Spokane as a writer on Indian subjects for the Chronicle at the time of the Northwest Indian congress. He has since been active as a traveling evangelist.

On April 4, 1948, a two-column article with three photographs of Paul appeared in the Chelan Valley Mirror as follows:

Paul Wapato to Speak at Local Church Tuesday. Will Deliver a Message Each Evening, March 30 Through April 4. Paul Wapato, local boy and well known throughout the community, is coming back to his childhood home town for a week's series of Bible Conference messages at the First Christian church March 30 through April 4, according to Carroll Shawen, pastor.

Recently he held two meetings in southern Idaho, one in the Bible Baptist church of Jerome and the other in the First Baptist church in Buhl, Idaho, where he was from March 1 through March 18. He come to Chelan directly from Holy Week meetings in the First Baptist church of Tekoa, Washington.

He is in North Central Washington to attend to some legal matters pertaining to a petition of the heirs of Wapato John to partition the allotment comprising the land on which is located the old Indian church. So while he is in the vicinity it become

possible for him to become the second speaker in a two week's series of meetings which had been planned by the Christian church for the Easter-tide season, The Rev. Shawen said.

Paul is a full-blood Indian, son of the late Charles Wapato and Matilda Wapato who lived for many years on the land which is now in the Manson district, and is a relative of the Peter Wapato family. He worked his way through the latter part of his grade school years in Chelan, through the Wenatchee high school, and through a four year course in Willamette University at Salem, Oregon, in the college of liberal arts and the school of law. He became a distinguished member in journalism for seven years, when he worked on the staff of the Daily Statesman, Salem; Portland News of Portland; Wenatchee Daily World in Wenatchee; and Spokane Daily Chronicle, and for four years was president of the Northwest Indian Congress.

For some years he has been engaged in Evangelistic work and three years ago conducted three night services in the local Christian church and was also guest speaker at the Chelan Rotary club while in Chelan.

Everyone is invited to attend any or all of these meetings and listen to Paul Wapato speak.

On December 15, 1950, this one-column article appeared, apparently in the Wenatchee Daily World;

Wapato Meetings To Be Concluded. Evangelist Paul G. Wapato Sunday night brings to a close his three weeks' series of meetings at the Calvary Bible Presbyterian church on the subject "The Bible Emphasis on the Christian Life."

Each evening of the closing meetings, Mrs. Wapato presents two soprano solos and Friday night will appear in native costume, as will also Evangelist Wapato. He will speak on "My Life Story."

Monday night, Wapato will begin a four-night series of messages in the Stemilt Hill Community church, concluding there with the service Thursday night. Friday, Dec. 22, he will return to his family in Winthrop for the Christmas holidays, and December 31 will begin a two weeks' series in the Community Federated church in Waterville, concluding the series Sunday night, January 14. February 4, Wapato announced, he will be in meetings in Long Beach, California, the first of four to be held in the Los Angeles area.

Returning one last time to the 1955 narrative of Paul's life:

Last fall [1954] he left on an extended tour into California and the Southwest. He suffered an attack from an old enemy, diabetes, in Albuquerque in early May.



Paul L. Wapato
P-3416
Living, Wash.

WAPATO EVANGELISTIC PARTY
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Summarizing from the article, Paul suffered a series of recoveries and setbacks and was visited by his wife when he had fallen into a coma and seemed at his worst following a ruptured bladder. The narrative continues:

But, miraculously, he came out of it and appeared to be recovered. After a few days Mrs. Wapato bade him goodbye and returned home.

But, on May 18 [1955], seemingly as an afterthought, death suddenly claimed him, at age 60.

The Omak Chronicle, on June 2, 1955, published the following:

Wapato Funeral Is Held May 24. Winthrop—Funeral services for the Rev. Paul Wapato, who died May 18 at Albuquerque, N.M., while conducting evangelistic services there, were held at Winthrop May 24.

Paul Wapato is buried at the Sullivan Cemetery in Winthrop, Washington. Paul and his wife, Elizabeth, who died April 28, 1995, are buried beneath a single large gravestone listing Maude Elizabeth Wapato and Paul Grant Wapato. The following discussion by Paul's younger brother, Frank, will explain where the name Grant came from, since it was not part of Paul's given name at birth.

Frank Wapato: Presence, Power and Humor

The following memories come from answers to a questionnaire Frank filled out for a book published in 1966.

Indian names are no more jawbreaking than the Scandinavian or the Slavic. But except for the Cherokees, alphabets were not devised and used for the different Indian tribes. It was extremely difficult to render the linguals, the labials and the other sounds of the northwest Indian languages into the phonetics of our English-Roman alphabet. Since the names of the northwesterners did not run to combinations of meaning translatable into such euphemisms as the Sioux "Sitting Bull" or "Rain In The Face," the results obtained in the construction of equivalents in vowels and consonants for the sounds of Indian names were not too satisfactory. The syllabification was conducive neither to easy nor to uniform pronunciation, among other things, and not infrequently the Indian seemed to be the goat of his own name.

No doubt by reason of these difficulties Father de Rouge decided in 1907 or 1908 to change the last names of certain students to English names distinctive in American history. We gleefully entered into the spirit of the thing and looked forward toward the moment when we would be presented with our new monikers. I recall one of the older boys already with a civilized name, Favel, insisted on having a new name, too, but he was



Frank Wapato, aka Paschal Sherman

not included in the select list. For some reason the Smitkin boys, Paul and Louie, also were not included. Perhaps their parents had objected. So far as I know, the parents of the others were not consulted, for one reason or another the new names were later dropped. The few still carried are reminders of a well-intentioned experiment which was not repeated.

My family name is Wapato which means potato in Chinook jargon and which my grandfather acquired when he became a potato king. He raised large crops of potatoes on the shores of Lake Chelan and transported them by mule-train overland for sale in Portland, Oregon, and other Columbia River settlements. My brother, Paul, was given a new name, too, but upon return to the public schools the following year he reverted to the family name. The new names were written on slips of paper and drawn from a hat. My brother and I were made to draw separate names but happily no internecine strife followed, for we were on the same side of the war—he became Grant and I Sherman.

Frank didn't explain why he changed his first name as well as his last. But he seems to have told his nephew, Paul Wapato, Jr., that it was taken from two medieval popes. From a list of Catholic popes, I found Pope Paschal I, died February 11, 824, and Pope Paschal II, died January 21, 1118, which seems to confirm this. Another interesting historical footnote is that

General William Tecumseh Sherman had a son, Thomas Ewing Sherman, who received a law degree in 1878 and was admitted to the bar before deciding to study for the priesthood. Thomas “was ordained as priest in 1889 and belonged to the Western Province of the Jesuit Order.” Perhaps this played a role in Father de Rouge ‘s choice of Sherman as one of the names for the Indian boys at St. Mary’s Mission. Thus Frank Wapato became Paschal Sherman.

Frank continues:

I came on the scene when the mission was in the heyday of its glory as an educational and religious oasis under Father de Rouge’s regime. The era 1907-1914 was memorable for many things. There was considerable building activity. The old boys’ school and church were torn down and a larger building and a new church constructed. The infirmary was put up and the girls’ school started and enlarged. A gymnasium, where school exercises were held, was built near the boys’ school. The grounds were well laid out and took on a parklike appearance with beautiful lawns, flower beds, and full-grown shade trees. In this era there came together a group of boys gifted in various ways more than in the average run of registrations. Fortunately, too, there came teachers who seemed really interested in trying to develop those gifts to the best advantage possible.



Appears to be Paschal Sherman in rear center

Father de Rouge had the gift in a rare degree of dealing with people in a way that moved, that evoked loyalties, that left lasting impression. He understood people.

He learned the Indian language well, Okanogan dialect of the Salishan stock, so that sometimes he preached first in English and then in Indian.

He knew the prayers in Indian and could lead the congregation in their recitation. How much of these prayers he composed, I do not know. They were inspiring, beautiful, and poetic. He heard confessions in Indian, English, and French. (Some of his Indian parishioners were partly of French extraction.)

Early he turned to advantage the Indian instinct to follow chiefs by developing the leadership of prominent tribesmen in church matters.

Indians in faraway places would gather on Sundays to say prayers and sing hymns in Indian by themselves since the priest could visit the different communities only occasionally, usually once a year, in the early days of his pastorate. The Indians on the shores of Lake Chelan would go in families many miles to say prayers and sing hymns at a church twice during the day on Sundays and feast days. On these occasions the local chief, Wapato John, would preach sometimes to his people on doing good and carrying out their religious duties. In case of death

they conducted funerals, in the absence of the priest, with appropriate prayers in the church and at the graveside.

On most feast days, however, the Indians went to the Mission by horseback or in rigs, some traveling three or four days, with full camp accoutrements. The Mission then became an encampment of 150 to 300 souls.

The "Madams" evolved at the mission about 1909. The Madams were women of various skills, knowledges and accomplishments. They formed a well-balanced teaching staff. I took piano lessons from one, a benign old soul, who seemingly used to doze as she sat beside me while I was playing a lesson and would wake with a start when I purposely struck a false note.

Two sets of religious Brothers served at the Mission at different times to my certain knowledge. There may have been a third set with a house of studies in Southampton, England. I received a letter from a Brother upon his return to Southampton.

The first group of three, whom we called Christian Brothers, were already at the Mission when I first came there in 1907. A Brother Celestine taught and led the school band. He was a fine musician (although, strangely enough, he never told me that in playing the base tuba, I had to keep time with the base drum,

which I discovered by myself after some painful sessions in which I was accused of being hopeless).

From time to time laymen were hired from various walks of life to serve as instructors. A carpenter from Omak and son-in-law of Madam La Londe, Ernest Middleton, presided over a shop to teach the boys general and bench (Furniture-making) carpentry. A Mr. John St. Onge came from Quebec to teach band, violin, and piano music. He was a good musician and left to take a similar post at St. Martin's College, Lacey, Washington. One of the most colorful was a half-breed, Samuel McLean, who taught oil painting and penmanship and was one the stars on the famous Carlisle football teams of Jim Thorpe's time. We had a representative of Oxford University in William Gannon who was an excellent teacher of English and who left to accept an instructorship in Gonzago University.

Outside the classroom and recreation hours, all boys had something to do on the farm and indoors. An establishment as large as the Mission, with farming and stock raising operators, required a lot of hands to keep it going. On the whole, as I recall it, the boys accepted the work as a matter of course and rather cheerfully. Few of them paid tuition fees. Their labors had a twofold purpose: To teach them agricultural, stock raising and such crafts as running the establishment afforded, including carpentry, plumbing, etc., and in the process, to



Paschal Sherman (aka Frank Wapato) third row on the right.
Colville baseball team, 1914.

produce beef, vegetables, and fruit for the school. At the time the school produced considerable of its own food since the surrounding country was sparsely settled with the transportation of supplies by steamer or wagon freight rather difficult and expensive. The younger boys took turns at housekeeping chores, sweeping the halls, classrooms and dormitories, helping the cook, washing and drying dishes, etc. The boys' school had lay cooks, generally Japanese in my time. I have done all sorts of work, including the repair of frozen pipes outdoors in winter in zero weather.

The work of the girls was indoors, attending to the school laundry, sewing on buttons, dressmaking, etc. It was rare that they did any weeding and other light work on the farm.

For most of my career at the Mission I was the organ player, and I recall the intensive drills we used to have under the conducting of Father de Rouge, one of the Brothers, or Professor St. Onge. (Apropos of nothing, I may mention that once while playing the organ alone in the choir loft a church mouse ran into my view on the right, apparently unaware of me and facing the altar, got on its haunches or hind legs still facing the altar as though in prayerful worship, and then after a minute or two descended to all fours to return to wherever it came from.)

Father de Rouge singled out the boys who showed unusual promise of achievement in the courses of study available. He took charge of the Latin and Greek classes. He was a sort of indoor peripatetic supplementing the instruction and exercises in these languages with discussions of various academic subjects of interest, which I can say, as I look back from the vantage point of a liberal education, were really enlightening and broadening. He inspired reading in fine literature, history, and philosophy—at least, in me to an extent that I was strong in these subjects and in college and at the university. Besides tests in Latin, English, French, and History, my major ordeal for the Knights of Columbus graduate scholarship was a three hour examination in philosophy.

Students with a special bent for music were encouraged to play in the band or orchestra. Our band practice, individual as well as ensemble, was unusually intensive, and succeeded in bringing our playing to a high pitch of excellence. We were so told by outsiders who were themselves experienced band players and we were acclaimed by crowds in Omak and at the Mission.

On Sundays and during holidays the morning study hours were given to painting, drawing, penmanship, and piano practice. Boys with a flair for painting were placed before easels for incursions into the world of art under the personal supervision

of Father de Rouge. One of the Brothers was a particularly apt teacher of drawing with crayon and pencil. Agapith whose last name I do not recall and whose career was so short lived became a master penman through correspondence courses that the boys took in penmanship.

I received more than my time allotted for piano practice because of my way with the ivory keys. Likewise one of the teachers whose name I cannot recall gave me special attention in geometry and I remember some novel discussions we had on theorems, which helped sharpen my wits. He used to spend from one-half to three-quarters of an hour lecturing us in philosophy, and I knew something about such things as the simple apprehension in Logic long before I went to St. Martin's College. Another teacher, Luergenmiller by name, was particularly good as an instructor in the courses of college rank and he seemed to take genuine delight in giving impetus to the progress of students with more than ordinary aptitudes.

Education historian David Lindeblad wrote of "Okanogan County's First College," in which he describes the course work at St. Mary's Mission school and how apt pupils were taken forward into college level courses. "Latin, Greek, calculus, Early and Modern History and college level mathematics all were available to the more advanced, more motivated students," he writes. He describes how one student, "Paschal Sherman,

moved directly into the junior class at St. Martin's College at Lacey. He had no trouble in the transition." He continues: "When Sherman moved on to the Catholic university in Washington D.C., where he attended graduate school, he had been sufficiently prepared at St. Mary's to pass qualifying exams in French and German."

Paschal, in his answers to the Mission questionnaire, writes:

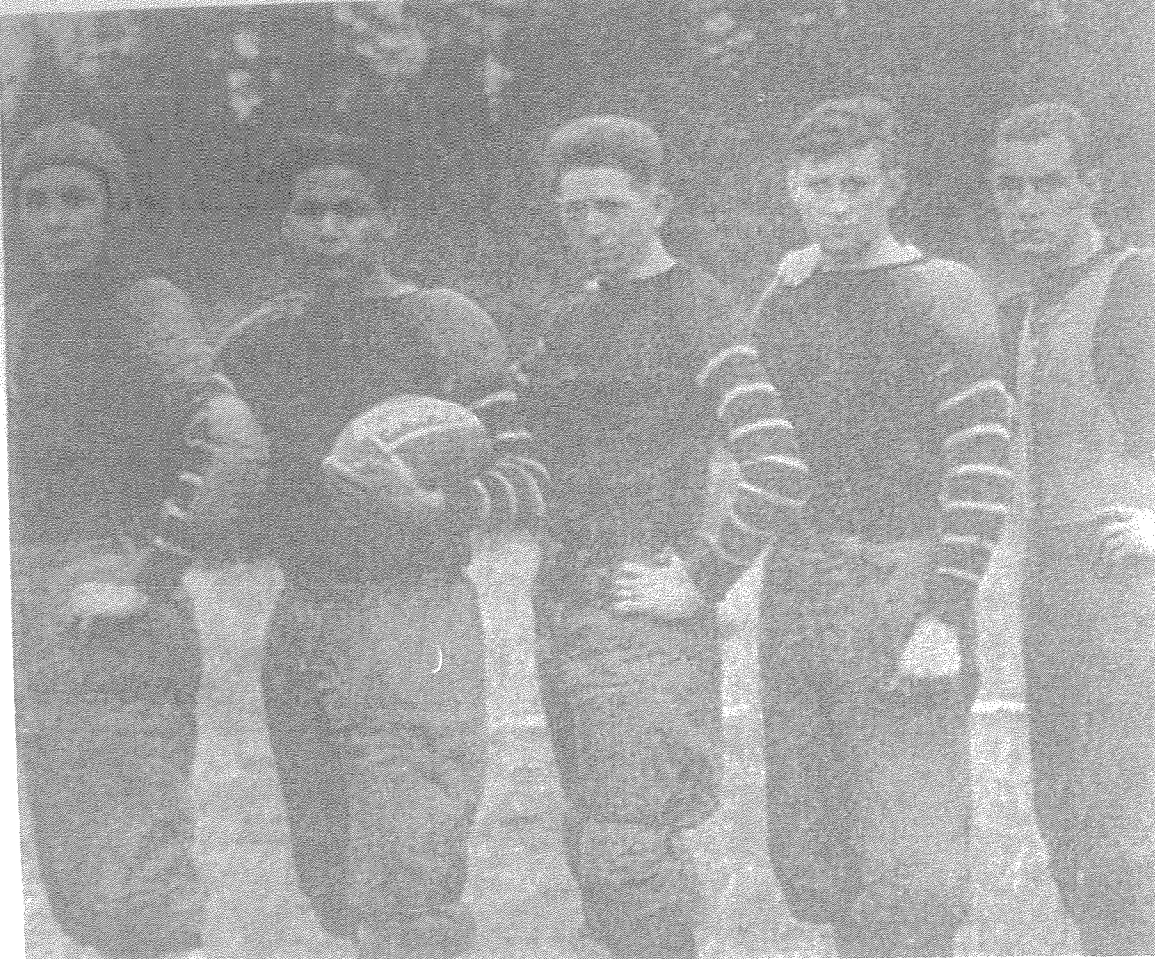
The question of the early college is not understood. It may be more proper to ask what college courses were given? We did not have a college as such with official authority to confer college credits and degrees. Yet the pursuit of the college courses produced great results and carried great weight so that practical recognition was given to it in assigning a Mission student to the proper class in college elsewhere.

The courses of college rank given at the Mission were: Algebra; Trigonometry; Geometry, plane and analytical; Latin; Greek; French; English; History, modern and ancient. There was some reading in the sciences but we lacked equipment for experimentation. Some paraphernalia for experimentation in physics were bought and were demonstrated to classes by one of the Brothers. The music taught particularly by Professor St. Onge was of a high order. With what I learned in this way I felt perfectly at home later in the academic circles of St. Martin's College and the Catholic University of America.

I entered Junior Class at the college in the fall of 1914, merrily taking up the philosophy course with Latin textbooks in three volumes. In my Senior year I won a Knights of Columbus graduate scholarship at the Catholic University, Washington D.C., in an international competitive examination. I could not have won except for the education obtained at the Mission, with the concomitant sharpening of my perception and wits, because the tests included Latin, French, English, and Ancient History, on which I obtained only little additional learning at St. Martin's. Indeed, with no additional French courses taken at the University, I passed the German and French tests for the Ph.D. degree some years later at the Catholic University. In the scholarship examination I do not think I received favorable consideration on nonacademic grounds: for example, the Catholic University, which graded the results of the tests, did not know I was an Indian until I reported to the registrar's office.

The college courses at the mission were not given in terms of years. How much time was devoted to any course depended on individual tenacity and opportunity.

While I made my way through St. Martin's first by such chores as sweeping halls, washing dishes, etc., and later by teaching Latin, I did have some home support for transportation, clothes and books.



St. Martin's College Football
Capt. Sherman with football

Father de Rouge was the dramatic department of the mission. Fired by histrionic instincts, he was enthusiasm and patience personified in his tireless efforts to develop the talents of a troupe of young players carefully chosen for stage productions. Shows were given in the school auditorium during feast days and at the closing exercises of the school year. Special performances were also given for important personages or for overnight visitors of distinction.

It was evident that Father de Rouge himself had excellent instruction and coaching in dramatics. His gestures and stage techniques were along classical lines: He expounded what I took to be his interpretation of Delsarte's principles on dramatic expression. From a book I read in the school library, I saw remarkable parallelism between the art of the mid-nineteenth century Delsarte in Paris and that of his flawless disciple in the western wilds.

We played abridged Moliere's, Handy Andy, and other standbys. We learned by heart "The Bear Story" of James Whitcomb Riley and other recitable masterpieces. We were always ready to entertain on any occasion. Besides we were given the advantage of speaking before people at almost every opportunity. Once I gave an address "Mon Reverend Pere" in French (composed by one of the Brothers) to the good Father on some anniversary before the assembled students and friends.



Paschal Sherman as a young man

We played in the brass and in the orchestra. On occasions I, among others, presented the aboriginal version of a piano virtuoso in the public recital of a Chopin or a Liszt.

All this gave us a sense of presence, and power and humor. As for me, one of the first times in my career I looked back to this training with a bit of solid gratification was when a newspaper in 1924 dubbed my address to a jury in the Superior Court, Everett, Washington, as—"Eloquent."

Overall, Frank Wapato, renamed Paschal Sherman, accumulated five college degrees by the age of 25 in 1921. He entered St. Martin's College at Lacey, Washington, as a junior in 1914 at age 18 and graduated in 1916 with a Bachelor of Arts degree at age 20. He won a Knights of Columbus graduate scholarship to attend Catholic University at Washington D.C. where he received a Master of Arts degree in 1917 at the age of 21. He continued at Catholic University for the next year or two and received a Ph.D. in Constitutional History where his thesis was "Our Indian Land Law: Its Origin and Development." Apparently stimulated by this study of law, he then attended American University, Washington College of Law in Washington D.C., and received a Bachelor of Laws (L.L.B.) degree in 1920 at age 24. Paschal continued one more year at Washington College of Law after receiving his L.L.B. degree and received a Master's Degree in Patent Law in 1921 at the age of 25. As a

historical note, the L.L.B. degree was the normal law degree leading to the bar at the time. Washington College of Law was the first eastern college to switch to the J.D. degree, doing so in 1964. The last U.S. university to switch from the L.L.B. degree to the J.D. degree was Yale University in 1971. After this, the J.D. (Juris Doctor) degree became the universal first law degree in the United States.

Paschal was employed by the Veterans Bureau, currently known as the Department of Veterans Affairs, and worked there for over 40 years, retiring in 1962. The VA web site says this:

Congress established a new system of veterans benefits when the United States entered World War I in 1917. Included were programs for disability compensation, insurance for service persons and veterans, and vocational rehabilitation for the disabled. By the 1920s, the various benefits were administered by three different Federal agencies: The Veterans Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions of the Interior Department, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

According to his obituary, Paschal first participated in “developing policies and field manuals that helped veterans to obtain their full disability benefits. He then held administrative positions in the Seattle and Boise area offices, as well as in the



Ed Claplanhoo of Makah, Angela Butterfield of Fort Hall, and Paschal in Washington, D.C. in 1969

nation's Capital. At retirement in 1962, he had risen to be vice-Chairman of the VA Disability Policy Board."

Paschal was a member of the American and Federal Bar Associations, the Washington State Bar Association and the National Lawyers Club in Washington D.C.

He was a member of the Kenwood Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland. According to the club's web site, "Kenwood Golf and Country Club is a private club with a select membership of approximately fifteen hundred. It has been in continuous existence since 1928."

After Paschal reached 55 years of age in 1951, he began to take a hand in Indian affairs, holding several offices in the National Congress of American Indians. He consulted with tribal organizations and reservation officials across the United States regarding policy and legal issues.

Three times he participated in Presidential inaugural parades as a representative of American Indians, when John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon took office.

Paschal retired from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1962. He died eight years later on April 14, 1970, in Washington D.C. of a heart attack at age 74. At a funeral ceremony attended by "close to 500 persons," he was buried at the St.

Mary's Mission Cemetery at Omak under the name Paschal Sherman.

At his death, President Richard Nixon issued the following statement:

The death of Dr. Paschal Sherman brings sorrow to the hearts of all who followed his inspiring life and career. He will be especially missed throughout the American Indian community, whose well-being he served with distinction.

But he will be affectionately remembered by countless other fellow citizens for the admirable qualities of mind and spirit that made him such an outstanding leader and great human being.

My deepest sympathy goes out to all who mourn his loss. May the knowledge of his enduring achievements comfort you, even as it will continue to enrich our country and the people to whom he was so devoted.

Wapato John died in 1911 while his wife Madeline lived until 1930, long enough to see Paul and Frank (Paschal) successful in the world that swept aside the traditional Indian life in which she and Wapato John grew up. Matilda lived until 1932 and took great pride in her sons' achievements, evidenced by the importance she attached to the boys' letters and her desire to share them with others.

Paul obtained a law degree, worked two summers and about six more years in journalism in Oregon and Washington cities, was president of the Northwest Indian Congress for four years, became an admired public speaker and finally created for himself an independent career as a speaker and evangelist, traveling across the nation engaged in public speaking for the rest of his life.

Frank became a highly educated attorney with five college degrees. He had a long career as an attorney and administrator at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and later in life became a national figure in Indian affairs. His nephew, Paul G. Wapato, Jr., wrote in his memorial essay on his uncle that he had “a love for the Constitution of the United States and the city that is the physical representation of the government based on that document.” President Nixon recognized “his inspiring life and career.”

When the opportunity presented itself, the Colville Consolidated Tribes replaced the old St. Mary’s Mission school with a modern new school with soaring architecture, and in 2005 opened the Paschal Sherman Indian School to inspire new generations of young people.

Summation

Sometimes important stories are lost as time recedes and need to be retold. The powerful story of the lineage of Wapato John,

Charles and Matilda and their sons Paul and Frank helps us not only to appreciate their struggles and successes but provides inspiration for all of us seeking to find our way in a continuously changing world. The Indians' world was turned upside down. The young Wapato John traveled and worked in the white world, learning along the way. He used his knowledge as well as his strong character to take up ranching, farming, mining, and trading. And when opportunities offered themselves he took them, as when he led his small group to take allotments on the north shore of Lake Chelan rather than go to the Colville reservation. Charles, like his father, left home to make his own way and took a homestead near Cashmere. In 1890 he and his wife, Matilda, moved to his father-in-law's homestead on Lake Chelan to care for him and run his ranch. They made their new homestead one of the most admired on Lake Chelan. When Charles was brutally murdered in 1906, Matilda took her children to the St. Mary's Mission School where she pushed her boys to study and advance. Paul left St. Mary's to complete his education in Chelan and Wenatchee and Willamette College. Frank went from St. Mary's to St. Martin's College to the Catholic University of America to American University, Washington College of Law. Both boys adapted and succeeded against the odds, just as had their parents and grandparents before them.

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Paul Wapato

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